

The 2004 Report on the  
**ILLINOIS**  
Policy Survey





**THE 2004 REPORT ON THE  
ILLINOIS POLICY SURVEY**

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## INTRODUCTION

Now in its twentieth year, the *Illinois Policy Survey* is a continuing program in the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University. It is designed to provide citizens and state leaders with systematic and representative information on public attitudes, values and expectations with respect to the performance of elected officials and policy issues facing Illinois.

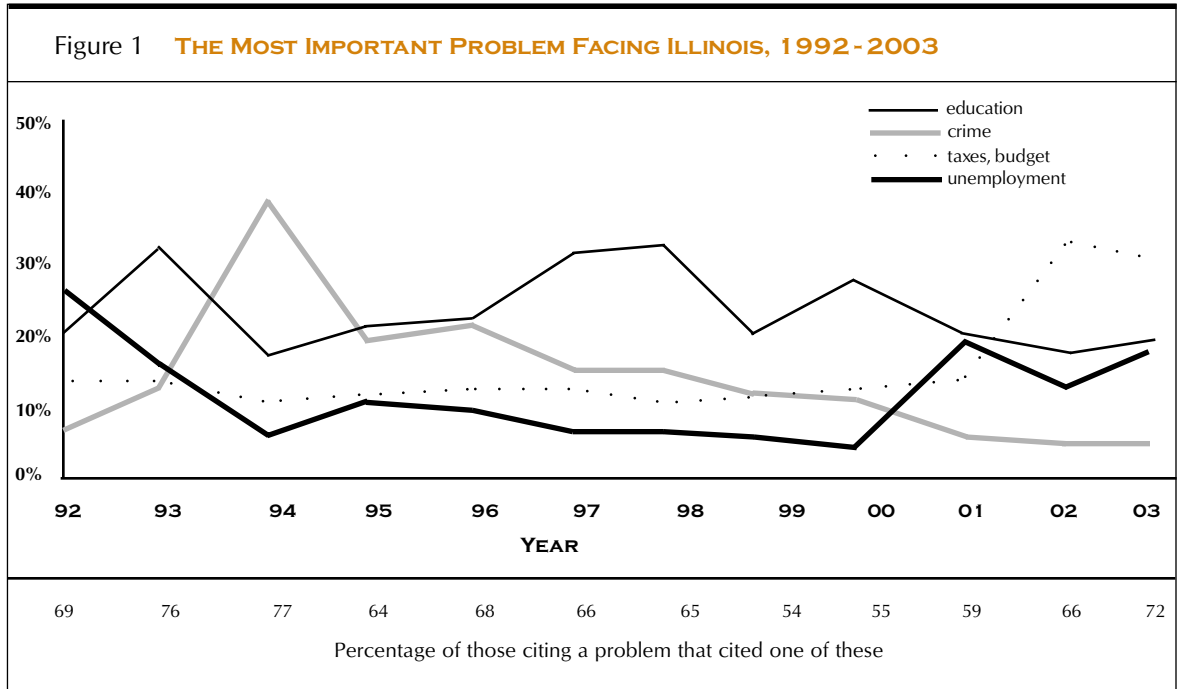
The *Illinois Policy Survey* is usually conducted in the Fall of every year. The sampling frame for this survey is all residences with telephones in Illinois. A disproportionate sampling strategy is used to achieve an approximately equal number of respondents in each of six geographical areas of Illinois. Telephone interviews with one thousand two hundred sixty-two men and women 18 years of age or older were conducted in November 2003 through January 2004. Since surveys question only a small proportion of the population, estimates based on survey data have a confidence interval based on the sample size. The 95% confidence interval for a sample of 1262 individuals is plus or minus 3 percent. This means there is a 95 percent likelihood that the population value falls within 3 percentage points of the sample percentage. The confidence interval for subgroups will be larger, and will vary with the size of the subgroup. Surveys of this kind may be subject to sources of error besides sampling error. For example, survey results may be influenced by events taking place while the survey is in the field, by question wording, or question order. In addition, people who were willing to participate may not reflect the views of individuals who were not at home or refused to be interviewed.

The *Illinois Policy Survey* has been conducted annually since 1984. Core questions asked every year are supplemented by questions of topical interest. Researchers, media, public agencies, and public interest groups can sponsor questions on the survey. Further information regarding this study is available by writing the Center for Governmental Studies, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115, or by phoning 815-753-0942. This report can also be found on the World Wide Web. Visit us at <http://www.cgsniu.org>.

# MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM

## Continuing Concern about the State Budget

Each year, respondents to the Illinois Policy Survey are asked what they consider currently to be the most important problem facing the state. From 1995-2001, responses to this open-ended question identified education as the most important problem, but in last year's (2002) and this year's (2003) survey, concerns about state spending and the state budget eclipsed education concerns as the most important problem facing Illinois. **Figure 1** offers a historical perspective on the proportion of respondents who have identified certain major issues as the most important problem in Illinois since 1991. **Table 1**

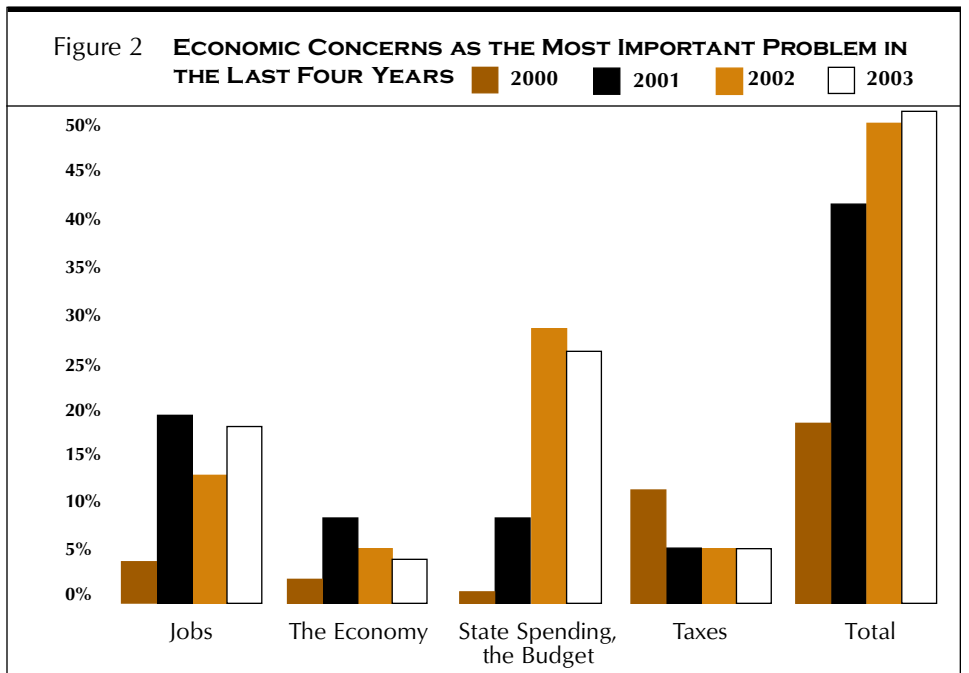


includes all issues mentioned by at least five percent of the respondents in each of the last two surveys. During the past two years, the proportion of respondents mentioning crime or gangs as the most important problem has dropped to less than five percent. In the 2003 survey, health care and corruption appear as new items in our top issues list.

**Table 1 THE TOP ISSUES THIS YEAR VS. 2002**

	2003	2002
State Budget	28 %	26 %
Education	17	19
Jobs, Unemployment	12	18
Health Care	3	10
Corruption	N/A	5
Government	11	5
Taxes	5	5
Don't Know	8	8

While corruption and concerns over state spending and the state budget have been identified as the most important problem in Illinois by a number of respondents in past years, concerns about individual issues have been insufficiently strong in most past years to report them other than as part of the more aggregated categories of government, politics, and corruption (for corruption) and of taxes and state spending (for the state budget). In 2003, taxes and state budget concerns each appear in our top issues list, and government/politics and corruption also appear as separate entries among our list of top issues.



Economic concerns have risen to special prominence in the last two Illinois Policy Surveys, with problems that can be characterized as economic concerns mentioned as the most important problem in Illinois by more than half of the respondents in both the 2002 and 2003 surveys. **Figure 2** illustrates the growing concern with economic issues. Concern over unemployment and jobs remains high, and concern over the state budget has exploded over the past two years. In this year's survey, concerns over the state budget most commonly referred to the state budget in general, the state budget deficit, shortfalls in funds for programs, cuts in budgets for programs, and revenue shortfalls.

# PRIORITIES FOR STATE SPENDING

## Support for Public Education Remains High

One of the ways in which budgetary and economic concerns can be understood is by asking whether state spending for different major program areas should be increased, decreased, or remain the same. **Figure 3** presents the results from both the 2003 and the 2002 surveys, identifying the proportion of the respondents who said that state government should increase spending for that particular program area. Respondents in 2003 expressed similar sentiments to the respondents to the last several *Illinois Policy Surveys*, with a majority of respondents supporting increases in state spending for public schools, medical care, public health, higher education, job training for the unemployed, and assistance for low income families.

Support for increases in state spending differ not only by the program area, but also by the characteristics of the respondent. As one can see from **Table 2**, respondents from Chicago generally expressed greater support for increases in spending than did respondents from other areas of the state, with respondents from the Southern Illinois region generally expressing the lowest levels of support.

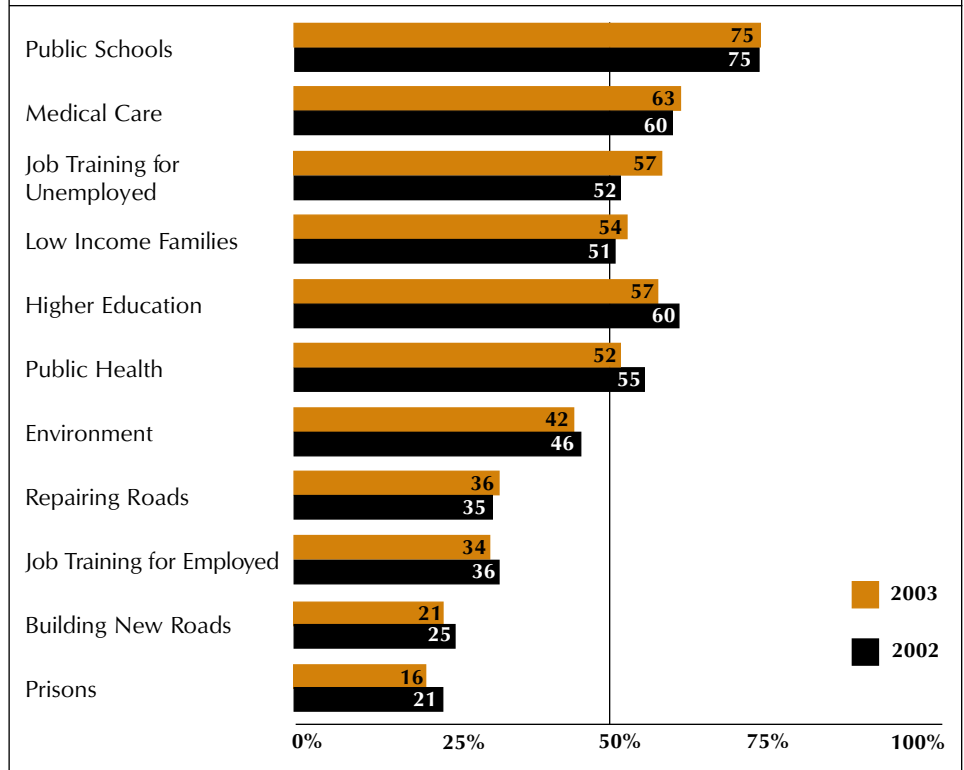
Party affiliation also mattered, with those respondents identifying themselves as Republicans being much less likely to support spending increases than Democrats or Independents.

Some other differences by respondent characteristics are also notable. Respondents under the age of 25 were the most willing to support state spending increases, while respondents 65 years of age and older were less likely than other groups to favor spending increases for medical care, public schools, and higher education. While men and women showed generally equal levels of support for increased spending on public schools, men were generally less willing than women to support spending increases in most other program areas. Support for spending increases generally declined with educational attainment, though support for increased spending on public schools again was for the most part independent of educational attainment.

In general, support for increased state spending on each of the program areas declined as the income category of the respondent increased, but support for increased state spending on public schools was greatest among the lowest and highest income categories and remained high all income categories.

In general, respondents who identified themselves as Black or African American were more willing than other respondents to support increases in state spending, as were those respondents who identified themselves as Latino or Hispanic.

**Figure 3 SUPPORT FOR INCREASES IN STATE SPENDING: 2003 COMPARED TO 2002**



**Table 2 SUPPORT FOR INCREASES IN STATE SPENDING, 2003**

	Public Schools	Medical Care	Job Training	Low Income Families	Public Health	Higher Education
Statewide	75 %	63 %	58 %	52 %	57 %	54 %
Region						
Chicago	85	72	69	68	68	65
Suburban Cook	72	66	56	45	61	48
Collar Counties	70	57	52	45	55	52
Northern IL	77	58	58	55	52	58
Central IL	76	66	61	52	46	52
Southern IL	69	55	49	44	45	47
Party Identification						
Republican	59	43	46	33	45	38
Democrat	87	81	68	70	63	60
Independent	75	57	59	50	59	58
Age Group						
18-24	87	76	62	62	62	67
25-34	81	64	56	54	67	57
35-44	73	56	54	44	49	50
45-54	73	58	56	45	54	49
55-64	62	59	63	51	48	49
65 +	59	51	59	46	49	36
Sex						
Male	74	58	56	47	54	49
Female	77	69	61	58	60	59
Education						
High School or Less	74	70	66	59	59	56
Some College	78	73	60	55	60	59
College Graduate	74	51	52	45	52	49
Income <21	83	81	80	71	68	66
\$21,000-34,999	74	78	66	67	62	51
\$35,000-55,999	72	60	53	53	61	54
\$56,000-99,999	79	58	55	47	46	59
\$100,000+	82	57	55	41	54	54
Race						
White	73	58	54	48	52	52
Black	89	91	91	85	79	72
Asian	68	60	45	63	83	48
Other	89	73	57	52	65	56
Hispanic	87	79	70	66	68	66
Non	74	61	57	50	55	53

# THE BUDGET

## Respondents View the Budget Problems as Serious

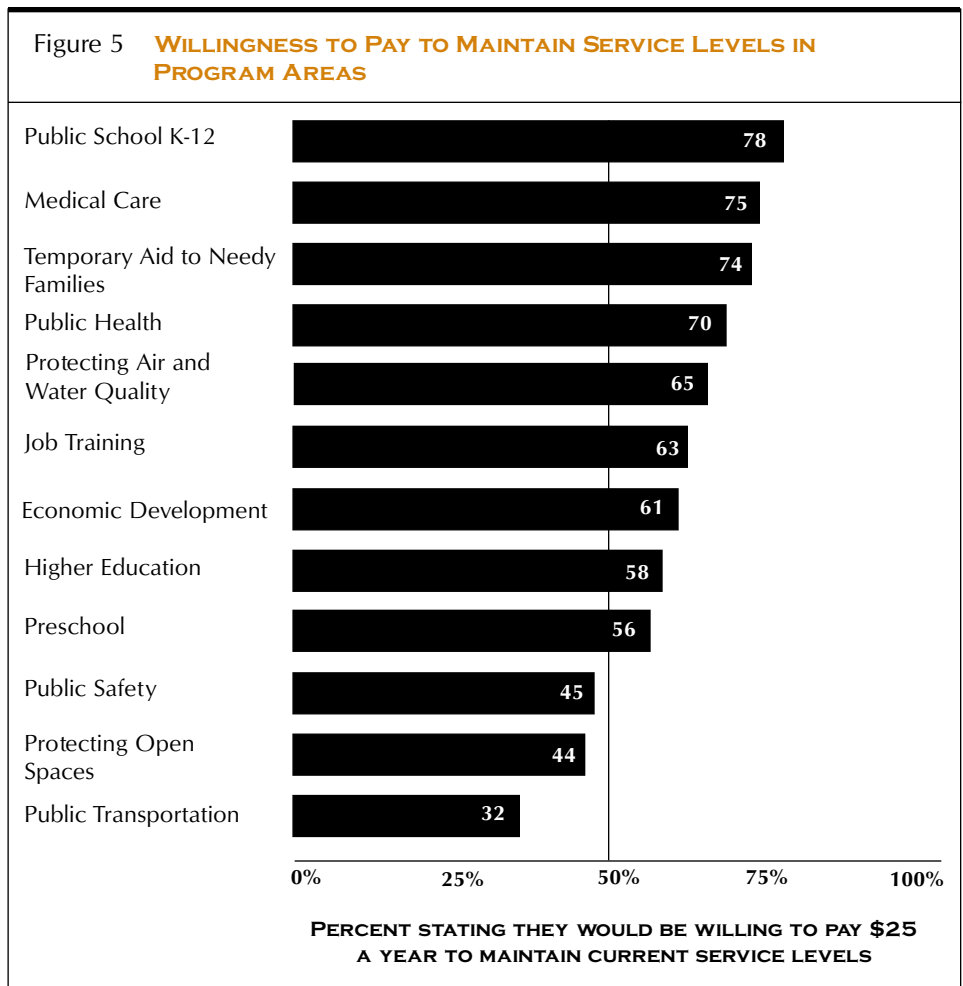
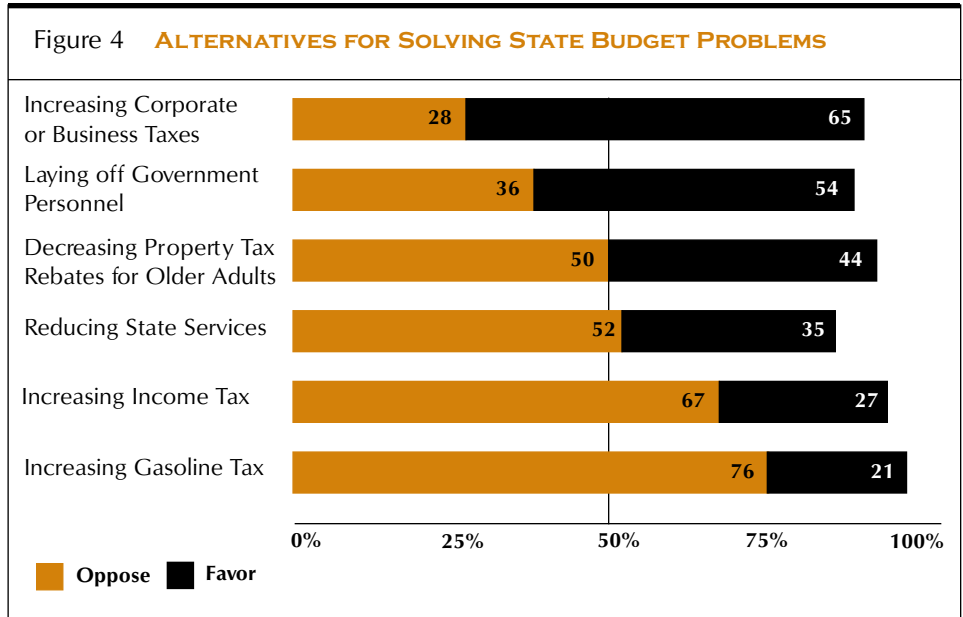
When asked whether they favored or opposed using various measures to solve the state budget problems, respondents indicated varying levels of support for the different measures. See **Figure 4**.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents supported increasing corporate or business taxes as a means of solving the state budget problems, and slightly more than half of the respondents supported laying off government personnel. Both of these tactics have been used or proposed by the governor and his administration.

At the other extreme, only about one-third of respondents would favor reductions in state services and only about one-quarter or less of respondents would favor increasing the state income tax or gasoline taxes as a means of solving the state's budget woes.

Nevertheless, the majority of respondents would be willing to increase their taxes by \$25 to maintain service levels in **each** of nine different program areas, and 32 to 44 percent of respondents were willing to pay \$25 more for each of another three program areas. Thus, many of the respondents expressed a willingness to pay as much as \$300 per year in additional state taxes to prevent service cuts and more than half were willing to pay at least \$250 more in taxes to avoid cuts. Support for the program areas, as seen in **Figure 5**, was consistent with the other results in the Illinois Policy Survey, with public schools, medical care, temporary aid for needy families, and public health programs receiving the greatest support, and public safety, protecting open spaces, and public transportation programs receiving the lowest, but still substantial, levels of support.

The message sent by the respondents seems to be that cuts in spending are fine in the abstract and are preferred to tax increases, but service cuts to named programs are not preferred to paying more to maintain service levels.



# HOW THINGS ARE GOING IN ILLINOIS

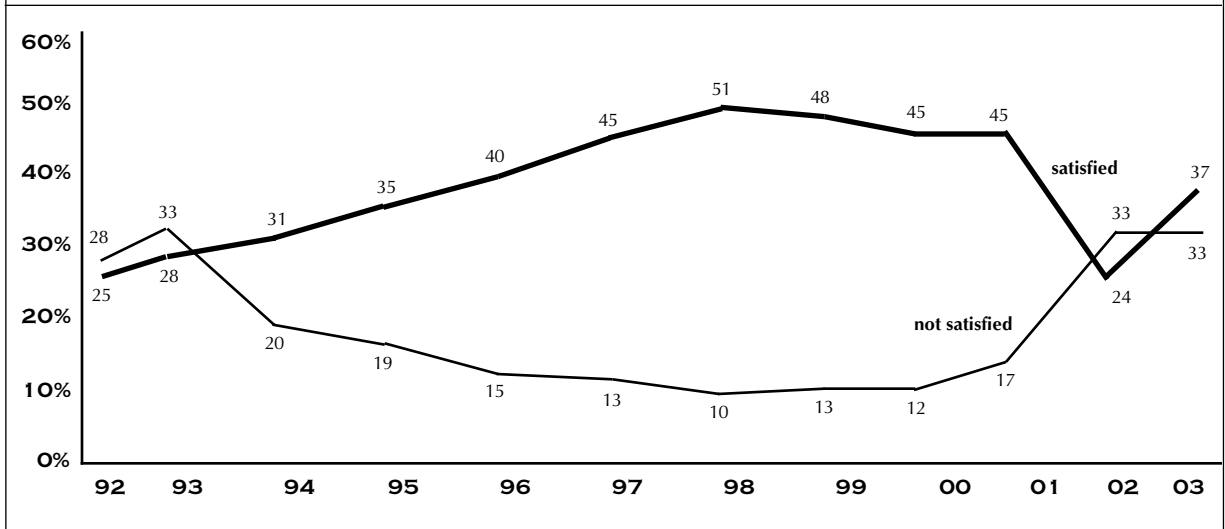
## Outlook Not Good But Is Improving

When asked to rate the Illinois economy on a scale of excellent, good, fair, poor, and very poor, only 1% of our respondents rated it as excellent, and 18% as good. In contrast 27% rated the Illinois economy as poor, and another 8% said the Illinois economy is very poor. These results almost exactly mirror those from last year's survey. However, there is some evidence that the outlook is improving.

After a drastic reduction last year in the proportion of respondents who reported being satisfied with the way things are going in Illinois, and a corresponding increase in the proportion of respondents who reported being dissatisfied with the way things are going, the 2003 survey shows some improvement. About 37 percent of this year's respondents are satisfied at some level with the way that things are going in Illinois, a marked improvement over last year's twenty-four percent. However, fully one-third, or the same proportion as in last year's survey, of respondents remain dissatisfied with the way things are going in Illinois. This represents the highest proportion of dissatisfied respondents since the 1993 survey also reported a figure of 33 percent, and more than twice the proportion of respondents reporting dissatisfaction during any of the surveys from 1996-2001. **Figure 6** shows the historic proportions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction as reported by respondents.

**Table 3** also indicates a more positive outlook about economic conditions than that expressed by last year's respondents. While nearly 43 percent of the respondents say that the people of Illinois are worse off financially than a year ago, this is a marked improvement from last year's survey when 63 percent indicated they felt the people of Illinois were worse off than they were a year previous. Similar improvements are also observed when one considers the responses related to personal financial

**Figure 6 SATISFACTION WITH THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING IN ILLINOIS: 1992-2003**  
In general, how satisfied are you with the way things are going in Illinois?

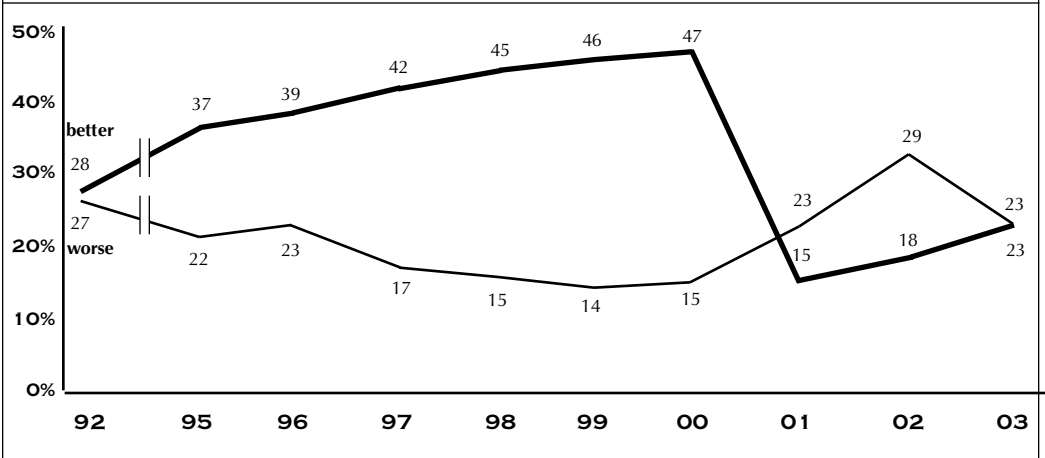


**Table 3 CHANGE IN FINANCIAL CONDITIONS IN THE PAST YEAR**

Would you say at the present time the people of Illinois are better off financially, just about the same, or worse off than they were last year?  
...how about you and your family compared to last year?

	Better	Same	Worse	Don't Know
Financial Conditions of Illinois Residents	13.3	42.9	42.7	1.2
Personal Financial Condition	22.9	53.7	22.8	0.5

**Figure 7 PERSONAL FINANCIAL CONDITION COMPARED TO LAST YEAR, 1992-2002**



# HOW THINGS ARE GOING IN ILLINOIS

## Outlook Not Good But Is Improving, Continued

conditions as compared with those a year ago. Nevertheless, a relatively small proportion of respondents report that they believe that financial conditions are better this year than last for either the people of Illinois or for their own family. **Figure 7** shows the historical results related to respondents' evaluation of their own financial condition when compared with the previous year.

As indicated in **Table 4**, unemployment remains on the mind of our respondents. Over 95 percent of this year's respondents believe that unemployment is a problem in Illinois, and over 80 percent indicate they believe it is a problem in their community. There was little or no improvement in these proportions in comparison to the last two Illinois Policy Surveys (i.e., those policy surveys conducted after the September 11 terrorist attacks). This continuing concern is consistent with the results reported with respect to respondents' perceptions of the most important problem currently facing Illinois.

<b>Table 4    CONCERN ABOUT UNEMPLOYMENT</b> Would you say unemployment is not a problem, a problem, or an important problem in Illinois? ...in your community?								
	Not a Problem		A Problem		Important Problem		Don't Know	
	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002
In Illinois	<b>3.9</b>	3.5	<b>35.5</b>	35.7	<b>60.3</b>	59.5	<b>1.3</b>	1.4
In Community	<b>17.9</b>	14.4	<b>32.0</b>	36.4	<b>49.2</b>	48.3	<b>0.9</b>	0.9

# EDUCATION

## Public Perception of School Quality

The state educational system has been one of the top four concerns throughout the history of the *Illinois Policy Survey*. Public education through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade has consistently received the greatest level of support of any program area as far as state spending increases. But evaluation of the quality of public schools has varied somewhat from year to year, and from region to region.

**Figure 8** takes a look at respondents' ratings of public schools in Illinois and the respondent's local area over time. The proportion of respondents rating public schools in Illinois as excellent or good has fallen to the lowest level in at least a decade, and the proportion of respondents rating the public schools as poor or very poor is also at a historically high level but not much different than that reported in several recent years. One sees a similar sort of drop in the rating of the schools in the respondent's own community or neighborhood, but one's own public schools are still rated higher than those statewide, following a long historic trend of respondents giving better marks to their own schools than they do to schools statewide. But there are differences among the regions of the state in terms of the ratings given to the local public schools, as seen in **Table 5**.

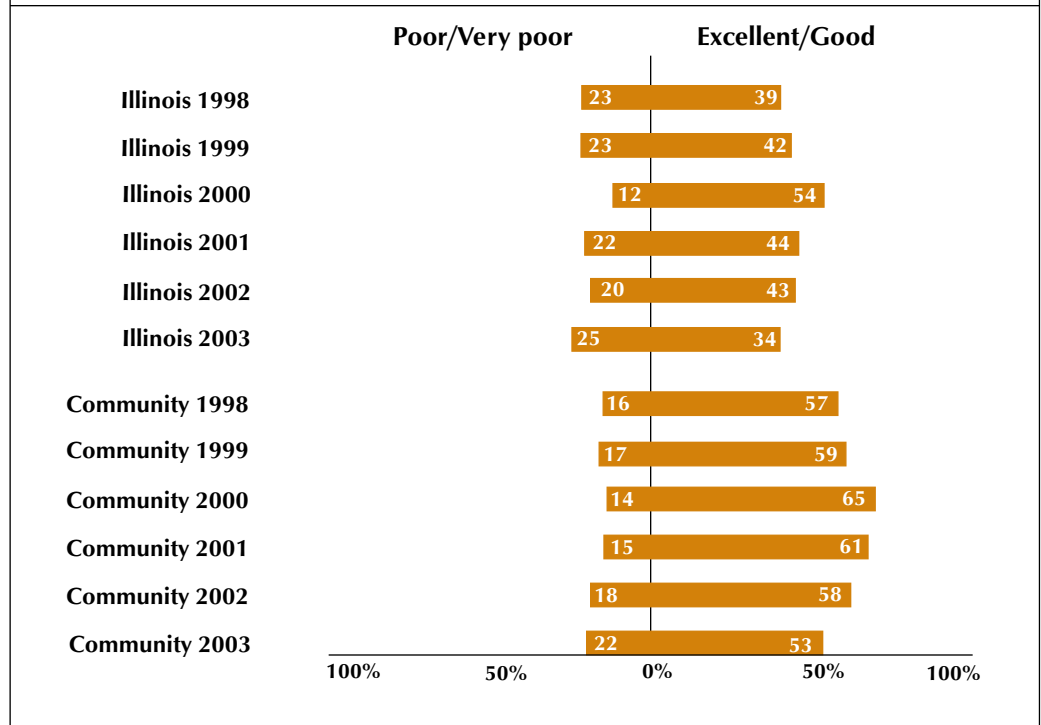
Respondents from Chicago give lower marks their schools than any other respondent group, and respondents from suburban Cook County and the Collar Counties give their schools the highest proportions of excellent and good ratings as compared with respondents from other areas of the state.

Each respondent was also asked what they feel is the most important problem faced by public schools in their community.

When asked an open-ended question about what they think the most important problem is that is faced by public schools in their community, nearly half of the respondents cited school funding issues. The overwhelming majority of those respondents who mentioned funding as the major problem faced by their local schools indicated that the schools in their community do not have enough funds. A much smaller proportion of the open-ended responses suggested that the local school funding problems were the result of poor financial management or excessive spending on the part of their local schools. See **Table 6**.

**Figure 8 QUALITY OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

In general, how would you rate the overall quality of public schools in Illinois ...in your own community or neighborhood.



**Table 5 EVALUATION OF LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1998-2003 PERCENT RATING EXCELLENT/GOOD**

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
<b>Statewide</b>	57%	59%	65%	63%	60%	53%
<b>Region</b>						
Chicago	35	37	36	31	27	29
Suburban Cook	70	77	77	71	80	65
Collar Counties	67	71	81	75	74	66
Northern Illinois	57	50	62	65	50	54
Central Illinois	61	59	70	67	60	53
Southern Illinois	54	57	67	65	67	57

**Table 6 MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM FACING LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Funding	47.8 %
Teachers (valuation of, availability, quality of)	15.6
Don't Know	13.1
Crime/Safety/Discipline	8.4
Quality/Performance	7.7
Administration/Management	6.1
Involvement	5.5
None	4.8

# SCHOOL FINANCE AND SCHOOL CHOICE

## School Vouchers and the No Child Left Behind Act Garner Support

Financing public schools in Illinois and the repercussions of the federal No Child Left Behind Act remain major policy issues.

As in several previous Illinois Policy Surveys, respondents were asked about their opinions with respect to various types of school voucher or school choice programs. Over 54 percent of respondents supported allowing parents to choose which public school their children will attend regardless of where they live and with state funding following the student to the chosen school. Only 43 percent supported extending school choice to include vouchers for students to attend private non-religious schools. Somewhat interestingly, support for vouchers remained at about 39 percent when respondents were asked whether they would favor extending vouchers from the state government to include private religious schools. See Table 7.

A majority of respondents indicated that they would support increasing the state income taxes and reducing local property taxes as a means of financing elementary and high school education. Nevertheless, the 52 percent of respondents who favored this notion were somewhat less than the 56 percent who supported this proposal in last year's survey. Of those who favored this change, about half would still support the change even if it meant that their local school district would have less money. Slightly more than half of last year's proponents indicated this same robustness in their opinion.

Another school finance related question asked respondents whether they would favor providing more state aid to school districts with less ability to fund their own educational programs. Slightly more than half of the respondents said that they would favor this, and only 14 percent opposed this idea. See Figure 9.

Table 7 **SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL CHOICE**

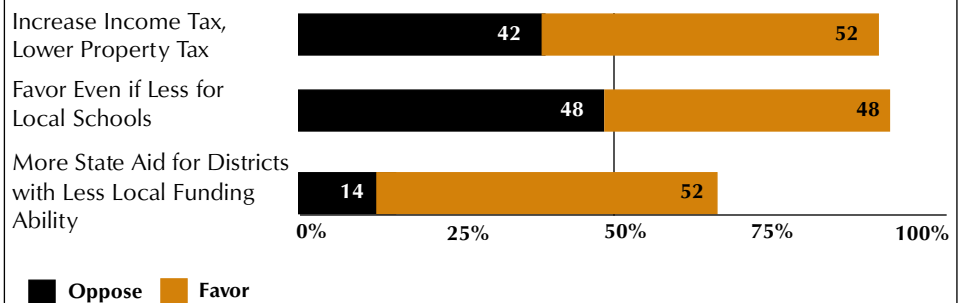
Please tell me whether you favor or oppose the following ways to change public education in Illinois. Do you favor or oppose allowing parents to choose which public school their children will attend, regardless of where they live? State fund would go to the school a student attends. Do you favor or oppose this, or do you not have an opinion? Would you favor or oppose extending this type of school choice to include private non-religious schools as well, with the state providing vouchers to cover its share of the cost, or do you have no opinion? Would you favor or oppose extending this type of school choice to include private religious schools as well, with the state providing vouchers to cover its share of the cost, or do you have no opinion?

	Favor		Oppose		No Opinion	
	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002
Public	54 %	50 %	37%	35 %	10 %	13%
Private (non-religious)	43	*	39		18	
Private (religious)	39	44	42	44	19	13

\*question didn't distinguish religious and non-religious schools

Figure 9 **CHANGES IN SCHOOL FINANCE**

Please tell me whether you favor or oppose the following ways to change public education in Illinois. First, providing more state aid to school districts with less ability to fund their own educational programs. Do you favor or oppose this, or do you not have an opinion? Some people have proposed that elementary and high school education should be paid for by increasing state income taxes and reducing local property taxes. Would you favor or oppose this proposal? If favor, what if this meant your own school district would have less money—would you favor or oppose increasing the income tax and lowering property tax?



# SCHOOL FINANCE AND SCHOOL CHOICE

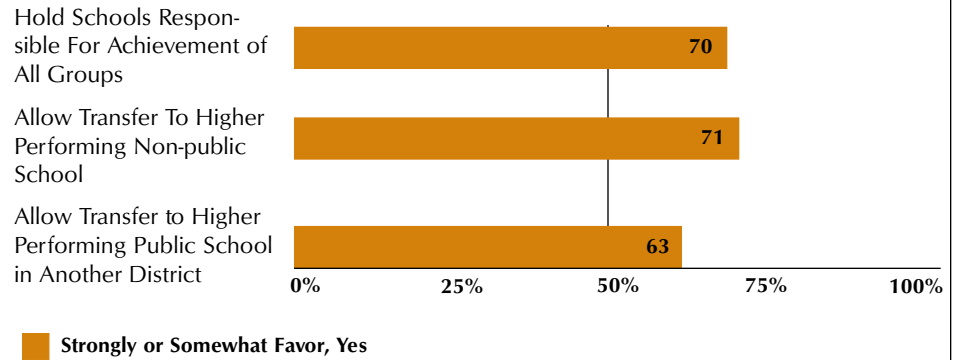
## School Vouchers and the No Child Left Behind Act Garner Support

This year's Illinois Policy Survey also included a set of questions about some of the major provisions of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). See **Figure 10**. The first question we asked focused on the provision in NCLB which holds schools responsible not only for the academic achievement of their student body as a whole, but also for the academic achievement of key subgroups of students including students with limited English proficiency, racial and ethnic minorities, and students from low income families. When asked how much they favor this provision in NCLB, about 70 percent of respondents either strongly favored or somewhat favored this accountability measure (28 percent of the respondents said they strongly favored it).

One of the other key provisions of NCLB is allowing students to transfer out of low performing schools to a better performing school in their own district. We asked whether the provision should be extended to allow students in low performing schools to transfer to a higher performing non-public school or to a higher performing school in another school district. About 71 percent of respondents indicated support for allowing students to transfer to nonpublic schools, and about 63 percent favored allowing students to have the choice to transfer to a school in another district. Thus, there appears to be some erosion of support for school transfers that would allow students to transfer out of their local community to successful schools in other communities. This is not surprising since schools are predominately funded in Illinois by local taxpayers in each community. Transfers across district lines or community lines may not be palatable given this funding system.

Figure 10 **SUPPORT FOR NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND**

How much do you favor or oppose holding community schools responsible for the academic achievement of all student groups, including racial and ethnic minorities, students with limited English, and special education students, or else face penalties...strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose? Current law allows students to transfer out of low performing schools to a better performing public school in their own school district. Should these students also have the choice to transfer to a higher performing non-public school? Should these students also have the choice of transferring to a higher performing school in another school district?



# HEALTH CARE SYSTEM ATTITUDES

## Most Favor Government Role, Access to Canadian Drugs

With many health care issues at the forefront in state and national politics, this year's Illinois Policy Survey asked a series of questions about health care related issues.

In an effort to better understand the general state of mind of the respondents relative to the U.S. health care system, we first asked respondents to tell us what they think is the most urgent health care problem facing this country. Analysis of the open-ended responses indicates that more than 52 percent of respondents think that access and affordability issues are the most urgent health care problem, with over 10 percent of respondents specifically mentioning the cost of prescription drugs as a particular health care cost issue. Another ten percent of respondents cited AIDS/HIV as the most urgent problem, eight percent cited communicable diseases including West Nile and SARS, and six percent thought cancer was the most urgent health care problem we face. About fourteen percent of the respondents said they didn't know when asked what they thought the most urgent health care problem might be. **See Table 8.**

When asked whether the U.S. health care system is best described as a system in a state of crisis, a system with major problems, a system with minor problems, or a system that doesn't have any problems, nearly two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they believed that the health system was in crisis or has major problems. This result is consistent with recent national polls on the same subject, as well as with recent polls of citizens in both Canada and Great Britain who expressed almost the exact same opinions about their own nation's health care system. **See Table 9.** As to what might be a policy response to these concerns, it is notable that nearly 70% of respondents to this year's Illinois Policy Survey believe that it is the responsibility of the federal government to make sure that all Americans have health care coverage. **See Table 10.**

Additionally, nearly three-fourths of our respondents believe that the U.S. Congress and the president should make it legal for Americans to buy prescription drugs from Canada. Only 13% of respondents believe that prescription drugs sold in Canada are less safe than those sold in the United States. **See Tables 11 and 12.**

Table 8 <b>MOST IMPORTANT HEALTH CARE PROBLEM</b>	
Access/Affordability	52 %
AIDS/HIV	10
Communicable Diseases	8
Cancer	6
Don't Know	14

Table 9 <b>EVALUATION OF U.S. HEALTH CARE SYSTEM</b>	
Which of these statement do you think best describe the US health care system today...the health care system is in a state of crisis, it has major problems, it has minor problems, or it does not have nay problems?	
State of Crisis	14 %
Major Problems	51
Minor Problems	33
No Problems	1

Table 10 <b>NATIONAL HEALTH CARE</b>	
Do you think it is the responsibility of the federal government to make sure all Americans have health care coverage, or is that not the responsibility of the federal government?	
Yes, Government Responsibility	69 %
No, Not Government Responsibility	28
Don't Know	3

Table 11 <b>DRUGS FROM CANADA</b>	
Do you think Congress and the president should or should not make it legal for Americans to buy prescription drugs from Canada?	
Yes, Should Make It Legal	73 %
No, Should Not Make it Legal	21
Don't Know	5

Table 12 <b>SAFETY OF CANADIAN DRUGS</b>	
Which of the following best describes your opinion about the safety of prescription drugs would in Canada. Do you think they are more safe than those sold in the US, less safe or equally as safe?	
More Safe	2 %
Less Safe	13
Equally as Safe	78
Don't Know	7

# RESPONDING TO THE THREAT OF TERRORISM

## Two Years Later, Post-9/11 Views Have Shifted Somewhat

Just weeks after the September 11 attacks, the 2001 Illinois Policy Survey asked a series of questions related to appropriate responses to the threat of terrorism and our capacity to respond to the threat of terrorism. We revisit some of those topics this year to assess changes in public opinion on these issues.

Respondents were first asked to rate the security of American airports today. More than three-fourths of the respondents said they felt our airports are either very secure or somewhat secure, and more than half of the respondents believe airports are more secure than a year ago with less than ten percent saying airports are less secure than a year ago. Still, more than 20 percent of respondents indicated that security concerns have reduced their willingness to fly.

The next questions on this topic asked respondents to rate the current capacity of the United States and Illinois to respond to a threat of a terrorist attack. The results are displayed in **Table 13** along with the results from the 2001 survey. As one can see, a substantially smaller proportion of respondents in 2003 feel that the United States' capacity to respond to a threat of terrorist attack is excellent or good as compared with respondents in 2001. A slightly larger proportion of the 2003 respondents rate this capacity as poor or very poor as compared with 2001 respondents. In contrast, about the same proportion of 2003 respondents rate Illinois' capacity as excellent or good as compared with 2001, and a slightly smaller proportion rate the capacity as poor or very poor as compared with 2001. Notably, the proportion of persons who answered "do not know" as to Illinois' capacity to respond was only half of the proportion of "do not know" respondents in the 2001 survey. We suspect that Americans and Illinoisans are much more aware and much more critical of our capacity to respond to terrorism than they were just two years ago.

Views have tempered somewhat with respect to two questions asked in both 2001 and this year's survey regarding approval for certain government actions that might be taken in response to the September 11 attacks. **Figure 11** indicates less support for tougher visa and immigration policies to make it harder for foreign nationals to enter the United States, and drastically less support (or at least strength of support) for expanded electronic surveillance.

**Table 13 OUR CAPACITY TO RESPOND TO THE THREAT OF TERRORISM**  
How would you rate the United States' current capacity to respond to a threat of a terrorist attack? ...the current capacity in Illinois?

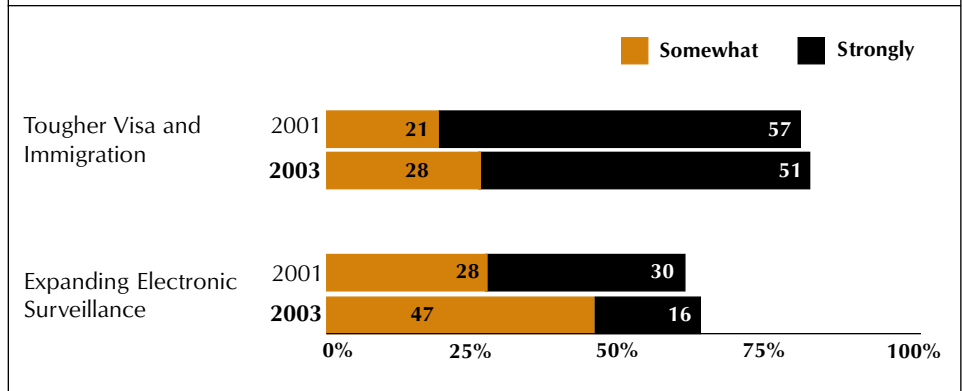
	2003		2002	
	US	Illinois	US	Illinois
Excellent	15.5 %	8.7 %	20.7	9.6
Good	39.0	38.8	43.5	39.2
Fair	31.2	33.2	22.6	26.1
Poor	9.6	9.9	9.3	12
Very Poor	3.5	3.7	2.4	3.1
Don't Know	0.7	5.3	1.4	10

**Figure 11 APPROVAL OF PROPOSALS TO INCREASE SAFETY AND SECURITY**

Some people believe the government is justified in limited certain rights and liberties when there is a threat such as posed by the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, while others are concerned the government may go too far. I am going to read you a list of actions or proposed actions in response to September 11<sup>th</sup>. Please tell me for each if you approve or disapprove.

...making it easier for law-enforcement officials to carry out electronic surveillance, such as monitoring telephone calls and email?

...tightening up visa and immigration policies in order to make it harder for foreign nationals to enter the United States



# ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRATION AND IMMIGRANTS

## Mixed Feelings About Our Melting Pot

Immigration and immigration related issues have received much recent attention in the press for some time and for many different reasons. A tight job market and the loss of jobs to other countries have fed concerns on one level. Suspicion of foreigners in light of the war on terrorism, increasingly tight government budgets coupled with increasing demands for government services, controversy over access to services and residency status for undocumented immigrants, and the growing Latino segment of the U.S. population have increased attention and concerns on other levels.

In an effort to better understand the nature of attitudes toward immigrants and immigration, we asked a series of questions about whether immigrants are making various aspects of our society better, worse, or not having an effect. The results are reported in **Table 14**.

On most dimensions, respondents don't believe immigrants are having much effect. However, more than 40 percent of respondents believe immigrants are making the situation in the U.S. worse with respect to the quality of public schools, the crime situation, and taxes. More than 40 percent of respondents believe that immigrants are having a positive effect on food, music, and the arts. Perhaps most notably, nearly two-thirds of respondents believe that immigrants have not had much of an effect on job opportunities for themselves or their family.

One key question asked in this year's survey explored whether respondents believed that immigrants generally are taking jobs away from American workers or taking jobs that American workers don't want. Nearly three-fourths of the respondents believe that immigrants mostly take jobs that American workers don't want. See **Table 15**.

With respect to the recurring controversy over whether the United States should make it easier for illegal immigrants to become citizens of the U.S., 70 percent of respondents opposed making obtaining citizenship easier. See **Table 16**.

Respondents were evenly divided when asked whether it was a good thing or bad thing for the country that the percentage of people living here who were born in another country has increased significantly over the last ten years. Similarly, respondents were divided in opinion over whether immigrants cost the taxpayers too much or in the long run become productive citizens, with 52 percent believing that immigrants do in the long run become productive citizens. See **Tables 17 and 18**.

Table 14 <b>EFFECTS OF IMMIGRANTS</b>			
For each of the following areas, please tell me whether you think immigrants to the United States are making the situation in the country better, worse, or not having much effect.			
	Better	Worse	Not Much Effect
Overall quality of life	20 %	28 %	49 %
Quality of public schools	11	41	43
Crime situation	2	44	52
Jobs for you and family	5	29	65
Food, music and arts	42	5	50
Economy in general	25	34	37
Taxes	12	50	32
Politics and government	14	26	56
Social and moral values	20	19	57

Table 15 <b>IMMIGRANTS TAKE JOBS AWAY?</b>	
Do you think that immigrants mostly take jobs that American workers want, or immigrants mostly take jobs Americans don't want?	
Take jobs American workers want	18 %
Take jobs American workers don't want	74
Don't know	7

Table 16 <b>CITIZENSHIP FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS</b>	
Do you think the United States should or should not make it easier for illegal immigrants to become citizens of the United States?	
Make it easier	25 %
Not make it easier	70
Don't know	4

Table 17 <b>INCREASE IN FOREIGN BORN RESIDENTS</b>	
The new US census results show that the percentage of people now living in the US but who were born in another country has increased significantly over the last ten years. Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing for the country?	
Good thing	44 %
Bad thing	44
Don't know	9

Table 18 <b>DO IMMIGRANTS BECOME PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS</b>	
Which comes closer to your point of view...immigrants in the long-run become productive citizens and pay their fair share of taxes, or immigrants cost the taxpayers too much by using government services.	
Become productive citizens	52 %
Cost taxpayers too much	43
Don't know	4

# EVALUATION OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS

## President's Rating Continues to Fall This Year

When the 2001 Illinois Policy Survey was conducted a matter of weeks after the 9/11 attacks, President George W. Bush and the United States Congress received record high ratings. The results of the 2002 survey showed a major drop in these ratings, but primarily reflected a return to the general historic range of ratings for these officials. In 2003, the ratings for both the President and for Congress continued to drop. See **Figure 12**. In fact, the President's rating dropped to the poorest levels seen since the last year of his father's presidency, with fully one-third of respondents indicating that they believed the president is doing a poor or very poor job (the 37 percent excellent/good rating is the worst presidential positive rating since 1994). See **Figure 13**. The Illinois Policy Survey was conducted over a period of time that included the capture of Saddam Hussein, with 695 responses from the time period prior to Saddam's capture and 567 responses from the time period after the capture of the Iraqi leader. Interestingly, the proportion of respondents who rated the job President Bush is doing as excellent or good so no change at all when comparing the pre-capture and post-capture responses. The proportion of respondents rating the President's job performance as poor or very poor moderated slightly from about 35 percent to about 30 percent when the two time periods are compared. This certainly is a smaller bump than might have been expected from this high profile event.

The proportion of respondents rating the job Congress is doing as poor or very poor more than doubled as compared with 2001 and 2002, but fell far short of the nearly 50% poor/very poor rating accorded to Congress in 1992 and represented close to a median level of the ratings over the past twenty years or so. See **Figure 14**.

Figure 12 RATINGS OF NATIONAL AND ILLINOIS GOVERNMENT, 2002-2003

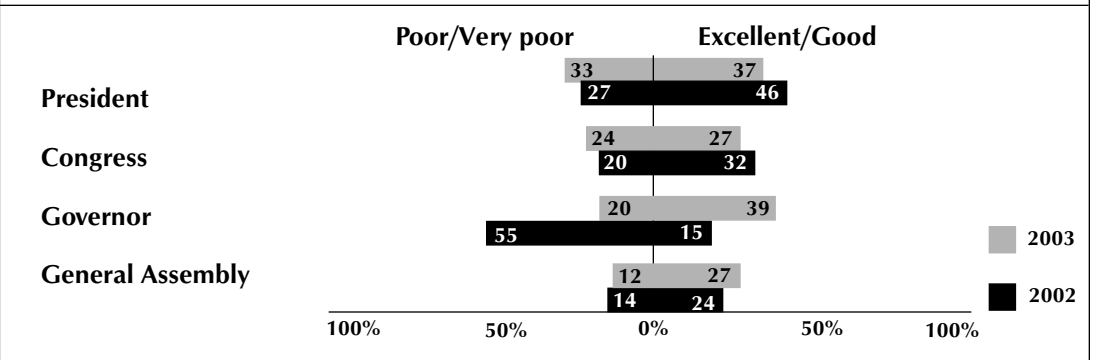


Figure 13 RATINGS OF THE PRESIDENT, 1989-2003

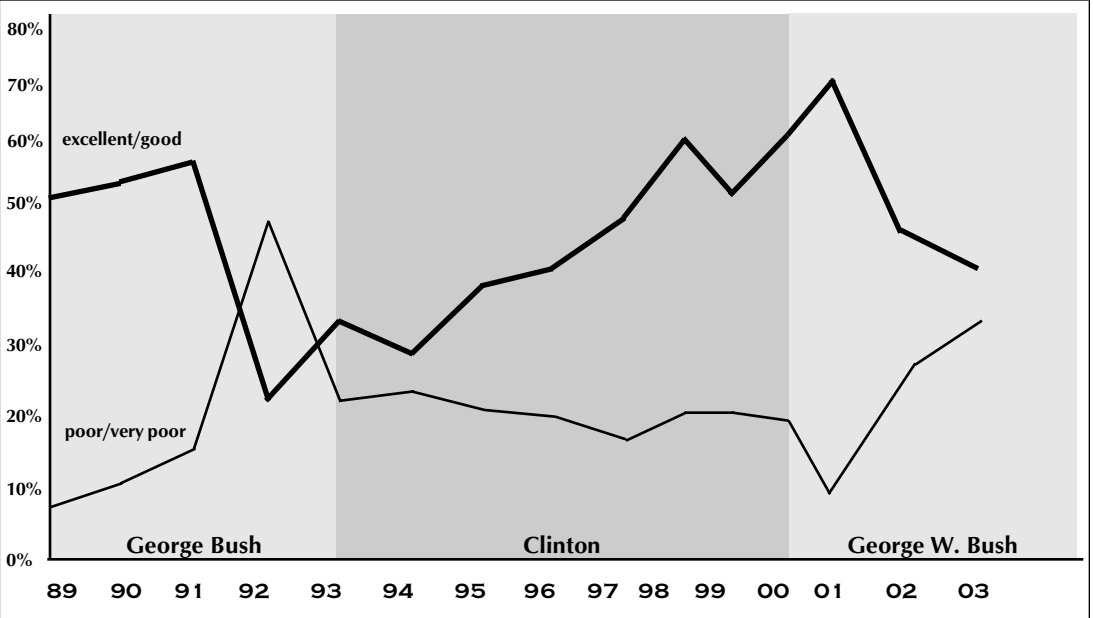
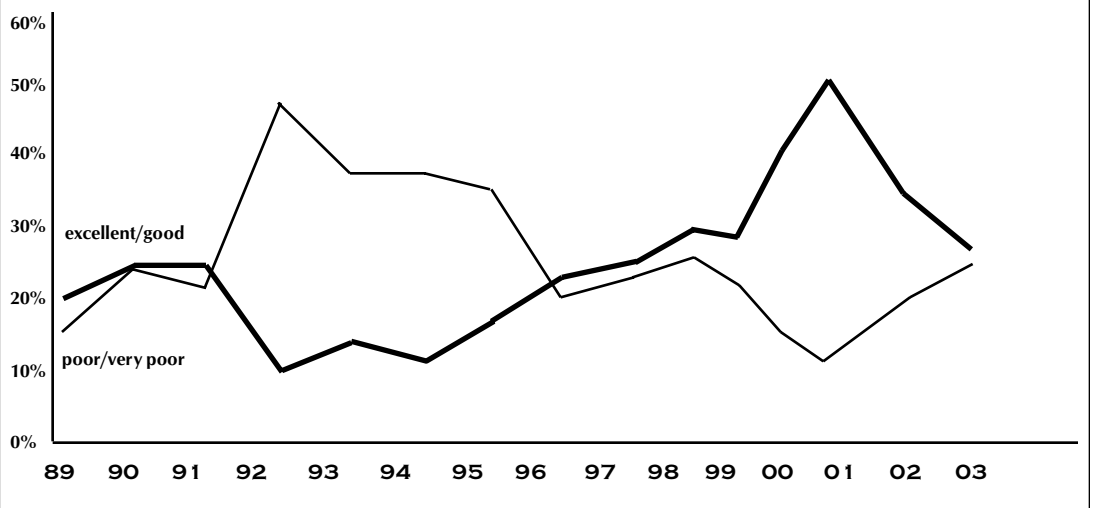


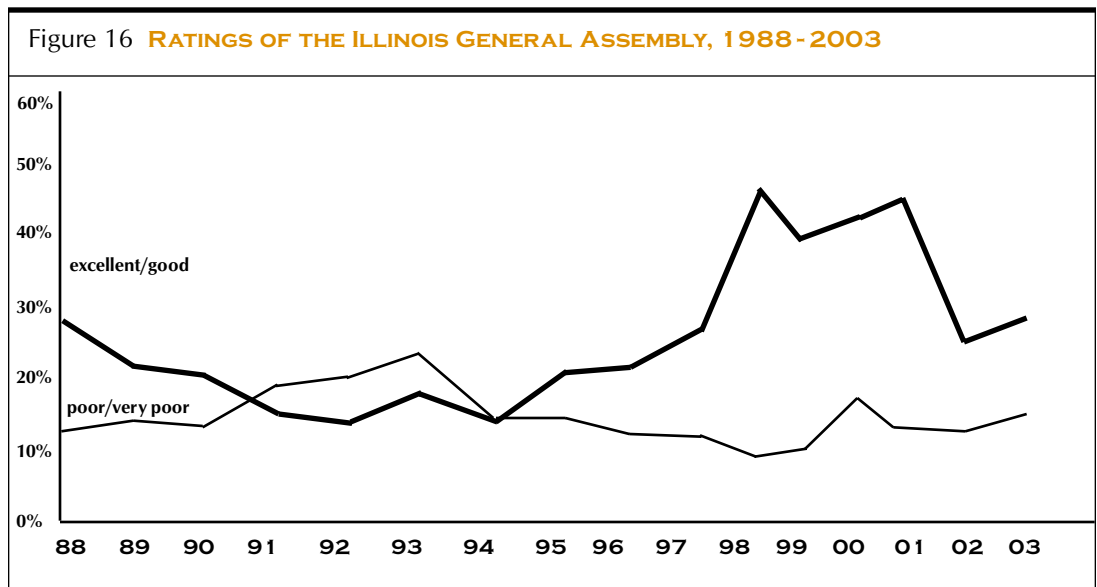
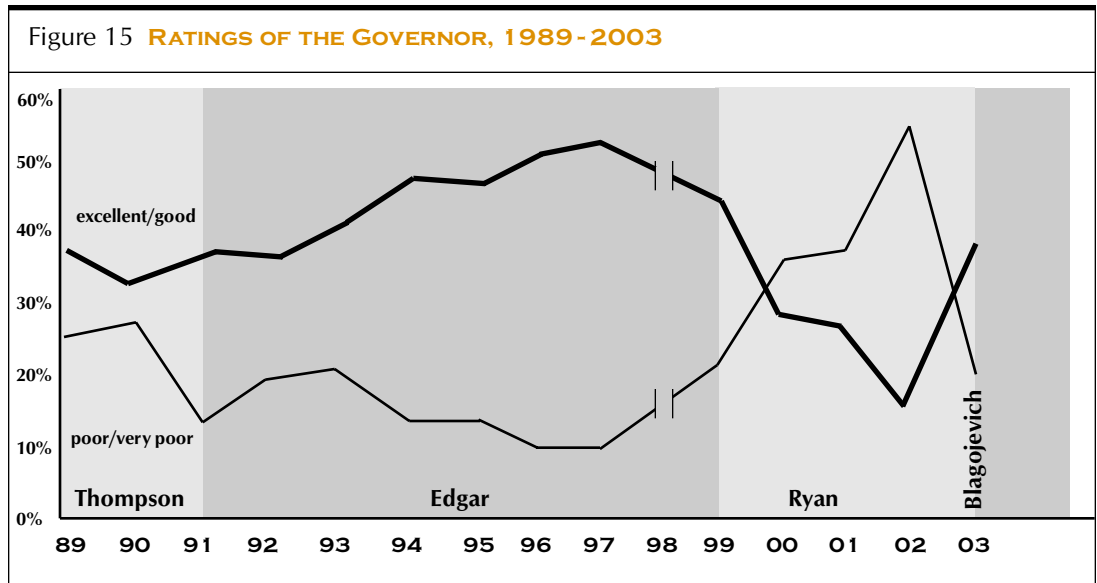
Figure 14 RATINGS OF CONGRESS, 1988-2003



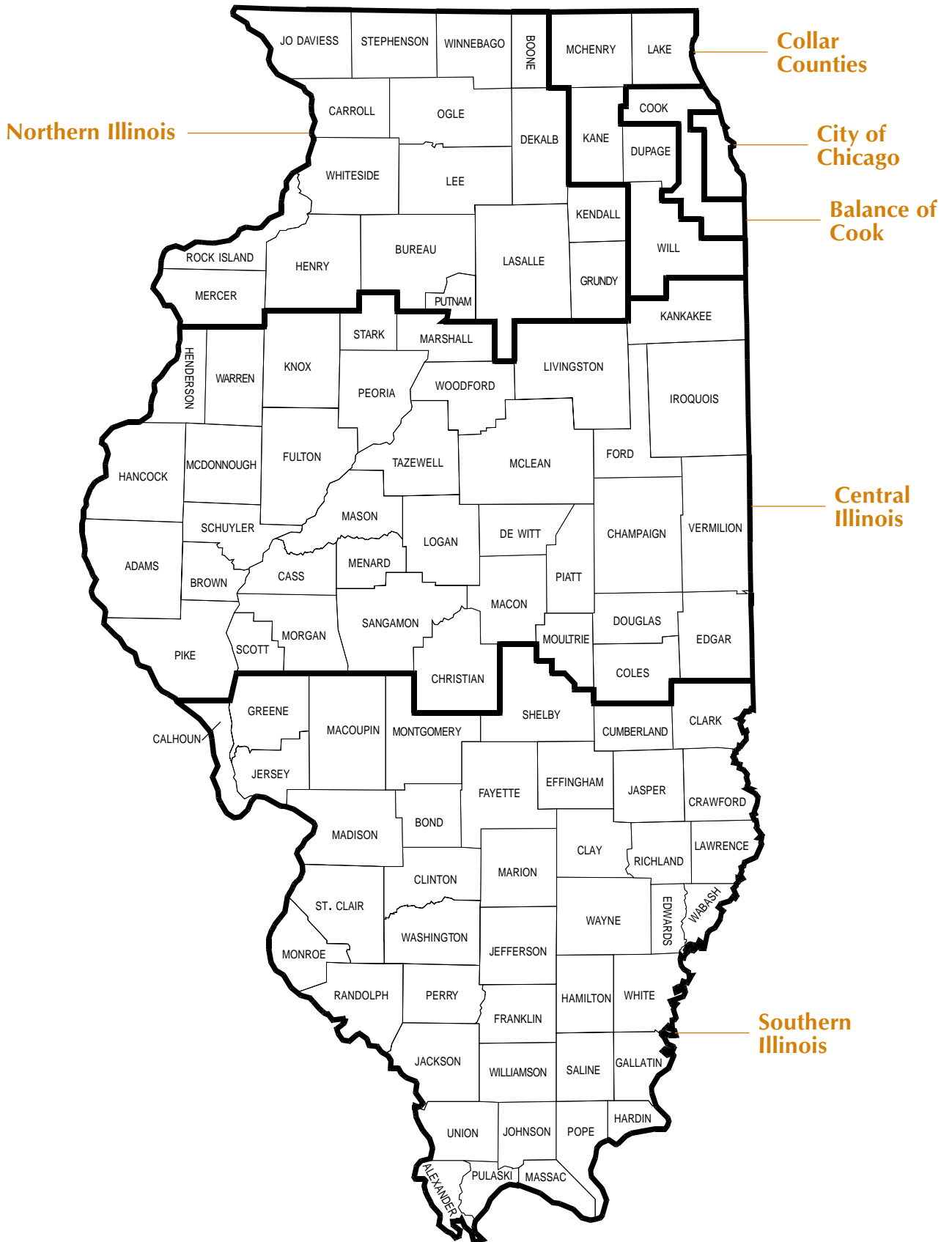
# EVALUATION OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS

## Job Approval Ratings at 10 Year Low, Continued

In contrast to the federal officials, the ratings of the job being done by Governor Blagojevich and the Illinois legislature improved from 2002 to 2003. Nearly 40 percent of respondents said that the governor was doing an excellent or good job, while only twenty percent said he was doing a poor or very poor job. These are ratings which are comparable to those received on average by Illinois governors during most of the last twenty-five years. See Figure 15. The ratings of the legislature slightly improved over the last year, with 27 percent of respondents rating the job done by the Illinois legislature as excellent or good and 12 percent rating the job done as poor or very poor. Again, these ratings are fairly typical of those given to the General Assembly over the past twenty years, though the excellent/good ratings were much higher than usual during the period from 1998-2001 and have now returned to their historical levels. See Figure 16.



# REGIONAL MAP OF ILLINOIS



## METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a telephone survey of the Illinois adult population, aged 18 and older. Interviews at the Public Opinion Laboratory at Northern Illinois University completed 1262 Interviews in November of 2003 through January of 2004. Interviews were conducted and responses recorded using a computer assisted telephone interview system.

The *Illinois Policy Survey* uses a disproportionately stratified sample, divided into six geographical areas: Chicago, the balance of Cook County, five collar counties (DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will), the rest of Northern Illinois, Central Illinois and Southern Illinois. Sample sizes in the geographical areas ranged from 198 to 221.

A two-stage sampling strategy was used. For the first stage, telephone numbers were drawn with a known probability of selection within regions. Both listed and unlisted numbers were included in the sample at this stage. The second stage of sampling was carried out when an interviewer reached an eligible household. An eligible household was a non-institutional residence in Illinois which was the home of at least one adult 18 years of age or older. After reaching an adult informant in a household, interviewers gave a brief explanation of the survey and the purpose of the selection process. The household member to be interviewed was randomly selected from among the adults who were at home.

Data were weighted to adjust for disproportionality in the sampling. Unequal probabilities of selection at each stage of sampling were accounted for in the initial weight. A post-stratification adjustment to the initial weight was calculated by using a six by two by six groupings of age groups by sex, by region using current population estimates from EASI data. The weighted sample was adjusted back to the original sample size for analysis.

The sampling and weighting procedures were designed to provide a representative sample of the adult population of Illinois that is accessible by telephone. For the first time, this year's survey was conducted in both English and Spanish. Twenty-three of the final interviews were conducted in Spanish. The conservative 95 percent confidence interval for a sample of 1262 individuals is plus or minus 3 percent. This means there is a 95 percent likelihood the population percentages will fall within 3 percentage points of estimates based on the sample percentage. Confidence intervals for subgroups of the sample will be larger, and will vary with the size of the subgroup.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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